

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

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THE SURGICAL DISEASES OF THE GENITO URINARY TRACT. BY G. FRANK LYDSTON, M.D. The F. A. Davis Company, 1899.

A perusal of this work impresses one that the author is, firstly, enthusiastically devoted to his subject, and, secondly, that he has an eminently practical grasp of the same. The book is in line with the most advanced teaching. The only deviation from genito-urinary orthodoxy for which the author can be arraigned lies in a disparagement of the importance and value of the discoveries of the etiological relations of certain micro-organisms to certain diseases. In many instances he prefers to speak of filth rather than of its specific bacteria. These heresies are by no means fatal, for the author always comes out, finally, at the same scientific goal as that reached by the closest conformist to the faith in the personality of the bacterians. His eminently practical views are broadly and judiciously founded; and, indeed, when deliberately considered, are in line with the most progressive scientific thought. He is suspicious of many of the diagnoses of gonococcic infection, and claims that, according to those who consider the specificity of the gonococcus as absolutely established, the germ has as yet practically no standing in court, as will be found the first time an attempt is made to back up expert testimony with the written authority. The opinions of these authorities serve to strengthen the author's views that the specific microbe of gonorrhœa is a derivative of some primarily innocuous germ and a purely evolutionary product. He is of the opinion that the contrast between clinic and laboratory is not yet finished, nor are the views of each reconciled.

"The best method for the abortion of urethritis is prolonged

and systematic irrigation of the anterior urethra with solution of potassium permanganate 1 in 5000 to 1 in 3000." "The average patient who has stricture resulting from a gonorrhoea that has been treated by injections, no matter how skilfully and beneficially, attributes his condition to the treatment. Should he consult a surgeon of anti-injection proclivities, his erroneous ideas are confirmed, much to the detriment of the reputation of his former surgeon, who, perhaps, treated the patient scientifically and conservatively." This is a sad criticism of the ethical spirit of medical men. We hope that the author has laid an unjust impeachment upon his professional colleagues.

"Very hard, cartilaginous, deep strictures of long standing, whether complicated or not, require perineal section, especially in cases attended by serious bladder complications." With regard to ordinary penile strictures, the author is an advocate of gradual dilatation. We are somewhat surprised to find sulphurated lime introduced into surgery for its anti-suppurative properties. The author gives a page to the consideration of this drug, particularly in connection with its use in venereal adenitis. He seems to have just grounds for his faith. It may be a valuable agent; who knows?

The author observes that many patients object to having supuration checked in the case of bubo, believing that it is detrimental to have the poison "scattered." Concerning such ignorant persons, he says, "when we meet with a person of this kind, however, we should do our utmost to promote suppuration, hoping that the resulting scar will be sufficiently large and unsightly to give satisfaction." This is not in keeping with the high general character of the book, which abounds everywhere with the loftier sentiment, and if there is any sentence which we would have the author omit, it is this.

"Colles's law, so called, that an hereditarily-syphilitic infant cannot infect its mother," the author ingeniously says, "depends simply upon the fact that the mother already has, or has had, syphilis." The author speaks in no uncertain tone upon the subject of the moral and ethical side of sexual questions. His views are radical and practical. All derangements of the sexual functions are, properly, the subjects for earnest scientific study.

The reviewer believes that the diseases of the sexual organs are quite as worthy of intelligent study and considerate treatment as affections of other organs, but he takes issue with the author when he says that "the sexual organs and functions are the noblest attributes of man."

Concerning the prostate, he says: "The surgery of the prostate has never been given a fair opportunity for development. The cases submitted to us for operation are usually those in which not only have all other measures of treatment failed, but complicating conditions have arisen that seriously enhance the dangers of operation. Operative statistics based upon the results obtained in the class of patients upon whom we at present have the most frequent opportunities of operating are practically worthless, excepting in so far as they bear upon a radical cure or recovery from the operation in a particular class of desperate cases. With a proper understanding of the limitations and indications of the operation, and a judicious selection of cases, there is no reason why early operation upon the prostate should not yield excellent results. In the opinion of the author, radical operations upon the prostate should be comparatively safe if performed prior to the development of septic complications or renal disease; *i.e.*, if performed at a comparatively early period after the development of urinary obstruction." This is true. The author's classification and analysis of *prostatiques* is excellent. "It is to be hoped that the general practitioner will, ere long, become more appreciative of the advantages of early surgical interference in prostatic disease. There is no reason why such cases should be allowed to suffer indescribable torture, to die, finally, as sacrificial offerings to a conservatism that conserves nothing but a dangerous routine, let alone policy, which has no place in surgery." This also is true. In the matter of operations for stone in the bladder, we are inclined to think that the author is a little out of the line of the general surgical tendency, and that he overestimates the value of lithotritry and litholapaxy in comparison with cystotomy. For ablation of the scrotum, the author countenances, and, indeed, illustrates, the operation with Horteloup's clamp. He also gives the picture of the clamp of one Henry for scrotal resection. The surgery of the kidney is

dealt with but briefly. An appendix is added, in which he gives the bibliography of his own writings, particularly those which have been referred to in the text.

This is a book of over a thousand pages. It does the author and publishers great credit. It is dedicated to the first of American genito-urinary surgeons, Fessenden N. Otis, many of whose teachings the author wisely perpetuates.

JAMES P. WARBASSE.

A TEXT-BOOK ON PRACTICAL OBSTETRICS. By EGBERT H. GRANDIN, M.D. With the Collaboration of GEORGE W. JARMAN, M.D. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Illustrated; 8vo. Pages xiv-461. Philadelphia: The F. A. Davis Company.

So many excellent works on obstetrics have appeared in the last decade that the need for still another volume on this subject may be fairly considered a matter of doubt. That this is the second edition would, however, indicate that some have found it useful.

The authors presuppose a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, embryology, and even of pathology. That the first two may be taken for granted is reasonable; but with the embryotic teaching accorded to the others, even in our most advanced medical schools, and with the entire absence of such instruction in the college days of most active practitioners, the omission of the latter topics is a doubtful advantage. Pregnancy, Labor, The Puerperal State, and Obstetric Surgery are the four chief divisions of the book.

The observations and directions for guidance during pregnancy are especially good, and the information given as to palpation and auscultation, illustrated by excellent photographs, are also of especial merit. Since L. O. A. is the standard type of nomenclature at the present time, and is adopted by the authors themselves, it should be adhered to throughout, instead of using the inverted order of M. I. A. and S. L. A., which follow.

In the description of the mechanism of labor, the text is supplemented by a beautiful series of photographs of the actual child in utero in each of the various positions, and the result is by far the best explanation of this little understood subject that is to be found in American text-books.